

PERRIS

Mervyn's closed its Perris store Friday, the chain's second Inland Empire location to shutter within the last 10 months.

The 80,000-square-foot department store, which opened in 1992, performed "below the company's expectations," said Mervyn's spokeswoman Deborah Papp. Mervyn's was at 2560 N. Perris Blvd. in the Perris Town Center, whose tenants include Wal-Mart and an Albertsons grocery store.

"We know from the research here that the (city's) economy was struggling," which affected store sales, Papp said.

Perris City Manager Joseph Mulloy admitted the city has struggled in recent years, but said it has shown improvement.

"It was a good store for the city," Mulloy said. "I had always thought they had done well."

The company told the store's 71 employees about the closing Friday. They can transfer to other Mervyn's stores or accept severance packages based on their years of service, officials said.

The closing leaves a dozen Mervyn's stores in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Lawaways from the Perris store will be handled at 12625 Frederick St. in Moreno Valley.

Papp said "no additional closures are planned at this time" in the Inland Empire.

Perris was one of four Mervyn's stores nationwide to close, Papp said. A store in Boulder, Colo. and two sites in Houston also ceased operations Friday.

Mervyn's owns 269 stores in 14 states, including 127 in California. The Hayward-based subsidiary of Dayton Hudson Corp. said last January that it would close about 10 stores as part of its repositioning effort to improve long-term financial performance.

Last March the retailer shuttered an unprofitable San Bernardino store, which employed 93. Timothy Steinhaus, director of the San Bernardino Economic Development Agency, said Thursday that no retailer has leased that space.

Mervyn's is the second chain this month to announce a closing of an underperforming store in the Inland Empire. A Marshalls department store at 10345 Magnolia Ave. in Riverside will close today.